

Congresswoman NYDIA M. VELAZQUEZ

Representing New York's 12th Congressional District
Ranking Democratic Member, House Small Business Committee



Disaster Resources Raised by \$1.4 Billion

In White House meeting, President Bush commits to \$21.4 billion in aid to NYC

Congresswoman Nydia M. Velázquez joined the New York delegation at a White House meeting last month, where President George W. Bush vowed to provide New York City with an additional \$1.4 billion in aid to recover from the terrorist attacks that destroyed the World Trade Center. His pledge raised the total amount dedicated for New York to \$21.4 billion.

"I am hopeful the President will stand by this promise," Velázquez said. "Over the last six months, I have watched residents of my district – including many small business owners – struggle to stay afloat. It is critical for the President to understand that without federal aid, it will be impossible to rebuild New York City."

About \$10 billion of the \$20 billion originally promised by Bush has already been spent. Of the

\$10 billion, a little over \$6 billion has gone to FEMA for clean-up efforts, close to \$3 billion has been used for economic development assistance, and more than \$1 billion was dedicated to other disaster relief and restoration activities.

An additional \$5.5 billion will be used to offer tax incentives for developing Lower Manhattan while \$100 million will go to Temporary Assistance for Needy Families.

The additional funding proposed by President Bush last month would include \$2.75 billion to repair damaged transportation infrastructure, \$1.8 billion in federal transportation money to help plan and build a transit hub, \$167 million for emergency repairs of highways near the World Trade Center, and \$750 million to reimburse costs for repairing damaged facilities.

Velázquez Challenges Bush on Welfare

Proposal hurts legal immigrants, working families, single-parent homes

Congresswoman Nydia M. Velázquez criticized President George W. Bush's welfare reform proposal last month for provisions banning assistance for legal immigrants, imposing more stringent work requirements and freezing funds for transportation assistance and child care for the next five years.

"We are in the midst of a child care crisis," Congresswoman Velázquez said. "One in four children children lives in poverty and more than 50,000 children are on a waiting list for public child care."

The President's plan would require more work from families, but spends no additional money on transportation and child care. Providing those services would make it easier to meet those even tougher new work requirements.

The work requirements would force every state to have 70 percent of its welfare recipients working 40 hours a week. This is a huge increase from the current policy, under which 50 percent of recipients must work at least 30 hours a week.



Congresswoman Velázquez is a leader on welfare rights issues. She introduced a reform bill last year.

Cuts Threaten Brooklyn Legal Services

Velázquez calls for agency refocus on low-income communities

Reacting to major cuts to legal services for low-income communities in Brooklyn, Congresswoman Nydia M. Velázquez recently called on the federally funded Brooklyn Legal Services Corporation A to reconsider changes that would jeopardize its mission.

The agency recently cut its bargaining unit in half. This follows a two-thirds cut in staff since January 2000. Layoffs have reduced disability advocacy staff by one-third and welfare advocacy by one-half. And during a time of rising homelessness, the agency estimates it will reduce

staff by up to 75 percent.

Congresswoman Velázquez stressed that these cuts threaten the interests of low-income families, who often don't have the resources to fight for their legal rights.

"These terminations come at an exceedingly difficult time for poor New Yorkers," Congresswoman Velázquez said. "In 2001, the number of children in New York City's homeless shelters increased 29 percent from the previous year. It is imperative that legal services programs focus their limited resources on direct assistance to poor clients."

New Bill to Provide Health Care in Senior Housing

Velázquez initiative would establish health centers for elderly

Congresswoman Nydia M. Velázquez introduced legislation last month to improve access to health care for low-income senior citizens.

At an event at a local senior citizens center, Congresswoman Velázquez unveiled the Healthcare Accessibility for Seniors Act. It would provide grants for the establishment and operation of health centers in federally assisted housing projects in which at least one in four residents are senior citizens.

The bill also requires that health care organizations for Medicaid beneficiaries provide specific services at the centers.

"This legislation will allow for easier access to health services for our seniors," Velázquez said. "They would no longer have to travel far for medical care – this bill would bring preventive treatment and immediate care to them."

The Health Care Accessibility for Seniors Act would also help simplify the medical process since seniors would be able to get their health questions – both simple and complex – answered on site.



Congresswoman Velázquez listens to Eva Rafaelin speak at her senior citizens center.

Velázquez Backs Extension of Jobless Benefits

New York City lost 134,000 jobs last year in the aftermath of September 11, and posted one of the worst job loss rates in the country this January. The City's unemployment rate is seven percent and rising, while the national rate is 5.6 percent and falling.

Worse still, a recent Department of Labor survey indicated over one million Americans are about to exhaust their unemployment benefits, and in the next three months an additional 2.1 million workers will exhaust their benefits - at a rate of 80,000 a week.

Responding to this crisis, Congresswoman Nydia

M. Velázquez joined House Democrats last week to force legislation that extended federal jobless benefits an additional 13 weeks.

Republicans opposed the package, favoring tax giveaways to corporate interests. But Republicans eventually relented. Congress has passed unemployment legislation during every recession for the past 30 years.

"Wealthy corporations don't need our help," Congresswoman Velázquez said. "But average American families do."

Grants Awarded to Our Community

United Academy Inc.....\$100,000	Yeshiva Jesode Hatorah.....\$271,395
Head Start program	E-rate Internet Connection
St. Frances Cabrini.....\$34,560	The Jewish Center for Special Ed.....\$64,140
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